United Nations A/AC.105/756

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2001

Original: English

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities on its twenty-first session

(United Nations Office at Vienna, 22-24 January 2001)

Contents

Chapter		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1-3	2
II.	Substantive questions considered at the Meeting	4-39	2
	A. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas (agenda item 4)	4-26	2
	B. In-depth review of the cooperation of organizations of the United Nations system in remote sensing and related geographic information system activities: implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 (agenda item 5)	27-33	5
	C. Enhancement of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system through the use of advanced information technologies (agenda item 6)	34-35	5
	D. Review of the plan of action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and implementation of follow-up activities (agenda item 7)	36-39	6
III.	Future programme of work	40-43	6

Annexes

I.	List of participants at the twenty-first session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2001	8
II.	Agenda for the twenty-first session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2001	9

V.01-80444 (E) 020201 050201

I. Introduction

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities held its twenty-first session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2001. V. Kozharnovich of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization was elected Chairman. The list of participants is attached as annex I to the present report.

2. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, in opening the Meeting, highlighted the importance of raising awareness about the relevance of space activities to everyone. She emphasized opportunities created by increased awareness at the highest level of the possibilities offered by new information technologies, as demonstrated by the recent focus of the Economic and Social Council on the digital divide and the new initiatives related to applications of information technology in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000). She also discussed outreach opportunities to be made available to decision makers and the general public at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in 2002, as well as during World Space Week, held annually from 4 to 10 October.

3. The Meeting adopted the agenda contained in annex II to the present report.

II. Substantive questions considered at the Meeting

A. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas (agenda item 4)

Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the areas of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes (agenda item 4 (a))

4. The Secretary of the Meeting briefed participant on the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses o Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies during 2000 bringing to their attention matters relating to inter agency coordination. The Expert on Spac Applications reported on the future orientation of th United Nations Programme on Space Applications an on activities planned for the Programme in 2001 an 2002, inviting organizations of the United Nation system to participate in those activities of interest t them.

5. Representatives of participating organization reported on the current activities and plans of thei organizations for 2001, 2002 and beyond. Report highlighted activities involving extensive cooperatio between various organizations of the United Nation system. The Meeting welcomed the fact that the result of those activities, described in the report of th Secretary-General on the coordination of outer spac activities within the United Nations systen (A/AC.105/757), were being used by an increasing number of organizations within and outside the Unite Nations system. The Meeting discussed how th efficiency and cost-effectiveness of outer spac activities of the United Nations system could b improved further.

6. The Meeting noted that attention should be give to ensuring that the relevant data were available in th proper format, for instance for use in the context o international conventions on environmental matter and as indicators for sustainable development, and tha gaps in the availability of data were identified an filled.

7. The Meeting noted the establishment of othe inter-agency bodies, such as the United Nation Geographic Information Working Group, with func tions closely relating to and potentially overlappin with its own functions and stressed the need to ensur coordination between those bodies.

8. The Meeting welcomed the International Charte on Space and Major Disasters, which had bee announced at the Third United Nations Conference o the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Spac (UNISPACE III). Under the Charter, countries in whic a natural or technological disaster had occurred coul receive emergency support, in the form of data data processing and interpretation, from the currer signatories to the Charter: the European Spac

Agency (ESA), the Centre national d'études spatiales (CNES) of France and the Canadian Space Agency. The Meeting urged other space agencies and satellite operators to provide data and data services at no cost or reduced cost in emergency situations.

Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities (agenda item 4 (b))

9. At its twentieth session, in 2000, the Meeting had agreed that, at future sessions, it should consider under a separate agenda item methods to enhance further the inter-agency coordination of space activities (A/AC.105/727, para. 17).

10. The Meeting welcomed the new agenda item of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space entitled "Means of and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system", to be considered under a three-year work plan from 2001 to 2003.

11. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Affairs agreed that the themes to be considered under the work plan in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee related to themes of importance to the Meeting. The Meeting noted that it was considering on a priority basis concrete proposals and possibilities for results-based coordination.

12. The Meeting also reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening existing coordination mechanisms involving organizations both within and outside the United Nations system, such as the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), the Sponsors Group for the Global Observing Systems, and the Integrated Global Observing Strategy (IGOS) Partnership, to support global priorities such as disaster management, protection of the environment and food security.

13. The Meeting considered a proposal by the Office for Outer Space Affairs on its joint initiative with the secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to facilitate the use of space technologies in disaster management, which might be considered an inter-agency effort at a later stage, involving other agencies. The Meeting recognized that disaster management was an area of high priority among organizations of the United Nations system and that inter-agency cooperation was important in that area. The Meeting stressed the usefulness of space technologies, particularly in disaster prevention and reduction, early warning and disaster impact assessment, relief and rehabilitation, and it noted with appreciation that the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the secretariat for the Strategy had invited other organizations to participate in the initiative. The Meeting agreed that the initiative should build upon the efforts being made in the areas relating to disaster management.

14. The Meeting noted that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had approved a list of questions (A/AC.105/L.223),[1] to be circulated to organizations of the United Nations system in order to solicit input concerning the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and that the General Assembly, in its resolution 55/122 of 8 December 2000, had encouraged all the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to contribute to the work of the Subcommittee by, inter alia, providing the Subcommittee with appropriate information in response to the list of questions approved by the Committee.

15. The Meeting noted that information provided by organizations of the United Nations system (A/AC.105/C.1/L.241) would be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-eighth session, in 2001. The Meeting also noted that any additional information provided by organizations of the United Nations system would be submitted to the Subcommittee as an addendum to that document.

16. The Meeting noted that the Office for Outer Space Affairs planned to organize during the thirty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee a forum on activities of organizations of the United Nations system. The Meeting agreed that such a forum should not be seen as an additional inter-agency coordination mechanism and that the forum would be useful in that it would increase the visibility of activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the Subcommittee.

17. The Meeting also agreed that, as an additional inter-agency contribution to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Office for Outer Space Affairs should make a presentation to the

Subcommittee to highlight examples of existing inter-agency collaboration in space-related areas. The presentation could be prepared on the basis of information provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system (A/AC.105/757). The Meeting agreed that interested organizations of the United Nations system should assist the Office for Outer Space Affairs by providing it with suggested texts and viewgraphs to be used for the presentation.

18. The Meeting also agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should take a more active role in bringing to the attention of other intergovernmental bodies within the United Nations system the benefits of space applications and of space-related activities being carried out by organizations of the United Nations system. The Meeting further agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should prepare a summary of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system (A/AC.105/757) that would provide highlights of inter-agency collaboration in a user-friendly format and that that document should be disseminated widely to policy makers and the general public as a special publication.

Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of organizations in the United Nations system (agenda item 4 (c))

19. At its twentieth session, in 2000, the Meeting had agreed upon a revised structure for the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system as contained in annex I to its report (A/AC.105/727, para. 15). The Meeting had also agreed that it should review the revised structure at its twenty-first session for possible improvement (A/AC.105/727, para. 16).

20. The Meeting had before it the draft report of the Secretary-General entitled "Coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system: programme of work for 2001, 2002 and future years". It was the twenty-fifth report on the subject, containing information from organizations of the United Nations system in an integrated form, outlining planned activities by field of application.

21. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with the agreement reached during its twentieth session, the draft report consisted of the following sections:

(a) Introduction;

(b) Participants in outer space activities of the United Nations systems and matrix of outer space programmes;

(c) Policies and strategies pertaining to coordination of space-related activities;

(d) Current space-related activities;

(e) Review of matters related to the coordination of activities within the United Nations system.

22. Under section II, entitled "Current space-related activities", the draft report contained information on activities and programmes on the following themes: (a) protecting the Earth's environment and managing natural resources; (b) using space applications for human security, development and welfare; (c) utilizing and facilitating information and communication technology for development; (d) using and improving satellite positioning and location capabilities; (e) building capacity for space applications for sustainable development; (f) advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment; and (g) other activities.

23. The Meeting reviewed the draft report and made suggestions and comments. The Meeting adopted the report as amended. The Meeting was informed that the final text of the report (A/AC.105/757) would be made available to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-eighth session, in February 2001.

24. The Meeting agreed that two new subsections should be added under section III of the report. The first should include information on enhancing partnerships with non-governmental entities. The second should include information on development of law, standards and ethics relating to space activities.

25. The Meeting agreed that the title of section IV, subsection E, of the report should be amended to read "Building capacity for space applications for sustainable development and enhancing education".

26. The Meeting agreed that annex I of the report, the calendar of significant events, should include up to five of the most significant events in space-related areas from each contributing organization. The Meeting also agreed that a similar approach should be applied to submissions for annex II of the report, the list of significant outputs.

B. In-depth review of the cooperation of organizations in the United Nations system in remote sensing and related geographic information system activities: implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 (agenda item 5)

27. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of linking institutions in the United Nations system concerned with space-related activities and those concerned with sustainable development, and restated its concern that the importance of space applications for sustainable development had not been emphasized enough in Agenda 21.[2] The Meeting stressed, in particular, the importance of strengthening its interaction with the Commission on Sustainable Development.

28. The Meeting noted that the provisional agenda for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development contained an item entitled "Information for decision-making and participation", under which the Commission would review chapter 40 of Agenda 21. The Meeting took note of the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution 55/199 of 20 December 2000, to organize in 2002 a 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and also decided to call the review the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

29. It was noted that a number of organizations participating in the Meeting were also partners in United Nations System-wide Earthwatch, which had coordinated input from organizations of the United Nations system for the review of chapter 40 of Agenda 21 by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its ninth session.

30. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the report of the Secretary-General on information for decision-making and participation, to be considered by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its ninth session, was expected to include a number of positive statements and recommendations relating to the application of space technology for implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21. The Meeting agreed that those recommendations should be brought to the attention of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and other appropriate bodies.

31. The Meeting encouraged organizations involved in outer space activities that were to participate in the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development or in the World Summit on Sustainable Development to actively promote at those forums the use of space technology for sustainable development. In particular, those organizations should consider presenting at those forums joint statements on behalf of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. The Meeting recommended that the Office for Outer Space Affairs consider participating in those forums.

32. The Meeting agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in cooperation with interested organizations, should prepare information material for the World Summit on Sustainable Development targeting decision makers and the general public. The material should summarize, in a user-friendly format, information in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities.

33. The Meeting agreed that the discussion on agenda item 5 should continue and that in future years it should include views on how to promote the application of all relevant space-related technologies, including remote sensing, geographic information systems, global navigation satellite systems and information and communication technologies, to sustainable development.

C. Enhancement of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system through the use of advanced information technologies (agenda item 6)

34. A representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs made a presentation on a new web site on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system (www.uncosa.unvienna.org), which had been developed by the Office and was ready to go online. The web site of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (www.oosa.unvienna.org) would link to this new web site. Information on the web site would include news and announcements, a schedule of activities, a directory of participating organizations and information relating to the Inter-Agency Meeting on

Outer Space Activities. The Meeting welcomed the development of the new web site and agreed that it should be placed on the server.

35. The Meeting agreed that its discussion on agenda item 6 should continue in future years with a focus on electronic information networking.

D. Review of the plan of action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and implementation of follow-up activities (agenda item 7)

36. A representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs briefed the participants on its plan of action (A/AC.105/L.224) to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III and invited other entities of the United Nations system to identify activities of interest to them and to carry out those activities jointly.

37. The Meeting stressed that the heads of organizations of the United Nations system should be made more aware of the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, and that the work of the Meeting should be included in the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). While the Meeting noted the ongoing efforts to reform the ACC machinery by streamlining the subsidiary structure of that body, it agreed that it should be possible to have its work included in the ACC machinery.

38. It was agreed that organizations participating in the Meeting should collectively formulate a message to the heads of organizations of the United Nations system and to policy makers in order to highlight the usefulness and cost-effectiveness of space applications. The message might indicate how the space applications could contribute to the implementation of some of the major recommendations made recently in the United Nations system, such as those in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000) and the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809).

39. The Meeting agreed that consideration of the matter should continue at its twenty-second session, under the item of its provisional agenda entitle "Review of the implementation of recommendations the Third United Nations Conference on th Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Spac (UNISPACE III)".

III. Future programme of work

40. The Meeting agreed that the United Nation Office for Project Services should be invited participate in its future meetings. The Meeting als agreed to invite the secretariats of environment conventions, such as the United Nations Framewo Convention on Climate Change (A/AC.237/ (Part II)/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex I), the Convention Biological Diversity[3] and the United Natio Convention to Combat Desertification in tho Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/ Desertification, particularly in Africa (A/49/84/Add. annex, appendix II), to participate in its futu meetings. The Meeting further agreed that represe tatives of CEOS and the IGOS Partnership should invited to attend its future meetings as resour persons during the consideration of its agenda ite relevant to their work. The Meeting agreed that work would significantly benefit from the participati of international and regional funding institutions a development banks, such as the United Natio Development Programme and the World Bank, and th they should be encouraged to participate in its futu meetings.

41. The Meeting agreed that at its twen second session, in 2002, it should consider following items:

1. Coordination of plans and programmes a exchange of views on current activities the practical application of space tec nology and related areas:

   (a) Discussion of current and future pla of common interest, including consi ration of how the activities of org nizations of the United Nations syst in the area of space science and tec nology and its applications relate their mandated programmes;

(b) Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities;

(c) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of organizations of the United Nations system.

2. Promoting the applications of space technology in the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.

3. Review of electronic information networking in the United Nations system.

4. Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

5. Other matters.

42. The participants agreed that they should continue their review of cooperation between organizations of the United Nations system in priority areas of space applications, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities, in order to ensure that the activities of the United Nations system in those areas were meaningfully integrated and that the services rendered to Member States fully met their requirements in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

43. The participants expressed their appreciation to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for agreeing to act as host to the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities at its twenty-second session, in 2002. The Meeting noted that the exact date of that session, to be held in Rome before the thirty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, would be determined in due course and communicated to the organizations of the United Nations system.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/55/20), para. 113.

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June* 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution I*, annex II.

[3] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

Annex I

List of participants at the twenty-first session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2001

Chairman: V. Kozharnovich (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

Secretary: T. Chiku (Office for Outer Space Affairs)

United Nations Secretariat

Office for Outer Space Affairs	M. Othman
	S. Camacho
	P. Lala
	S. Chernikov
	C. Davies
	R. Wickramatunga
United Nations Environment Programme	R. G. Witt
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	D. Stevens
Economic Commission for Africa	A. Gulaid

United Nations bodies

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	J.-Y. Bouchardy
	E. Bjorgo

Specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	He Changchui
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	R. Missotten
World Meteorological Organization	R. Yamada
World Intellectual Property Organization	I. Miyamoto
International Atomic Energy Agency	I. Barraclough

Annex II

Agenda for the twenty-first session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2001

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of the Chairman.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas:
   (a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the areas of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes;
   (b) Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities;
   (c) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of organizations of the United Nations system.
5. In-depth review of the cooperation of organizations of the United Nations system in remote sensing and related geographic information system activities: implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.
6. Enhancement of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system through the use of advanced information technologies.
7. Review of the plan of action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and implementation of follow-up activities.
8. Other matters:
   (a) Future meetings;
   (b) Additional matters.